

INTELLIGENCE 4/20 WA
NIGHT LD
BY JOHN HALL

WASHINGTON (UPI) --AMERICAN ESTIMATES OF SOVIET STRATEGIC POWER-- ON LAND, ON SEA AND IN THE AIR--HAVE INCREASED AT A DIZZYING RATE IN THE THREE MONTHS SINCE THE NIXON ADMINISTRATION TOOK OFFICE. THE INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATES FORM THE BASIS FOR A GALAXY OF STRATEGIC WEAPONS REQUESTS FROM THE PENTAGON--INCLUDING THE CONTROVERSIAL SAFEGUARD ANTIBALLISTIC MISSILE SYSTEM.

A SIDE-BY-SIDE COMPARISON OF HOW THE JOHNSON AND NIXON ADMINISTRATIONS INTERPRETED DATA SUPPLIED BY THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY (CIA) PRODUCES STARK DIFFERENCES.

THE JOHNSON ADMINISTRATION'S ESTIMATES WERE CONTAINED IN A POSTURE STATEMENT SUBMITTED TO CONGRESS BY FORMER DEFENSE SECRETARY CLARK M. CLIFFORD LAST JANUARY. THE NIXON ADMINISTRATION'S ESTIMATES WERE CONTAINED IN STATEMENTS MADE SINCE THEN BY DEFENSE SECRETARY MELVIN R. LAIRD AND THE SECRETARIES OF THE ARMY, NAVY, AND AIR FORCE.

HERE IS HOW THE TWO ADMINISTRATIONS SIZED UP THE SOVIET THREAT:

ARM DEFENSES

CLIFFORD SAID AN ABM SYSTEM NOW DEPLOYED AROUND MOSCOW, CALLED GALOSH, WAS ONLY "A LIMITED DEFENSE" THAT COULD BE "SERIOUSLY DEGRADED BY CURRENTLY PROGRAMMED U.S. WEAPONS SYSTEMS." BUT HE SAID THE U.S. STRATEGIC OFFENSIVE--FORCE MUST BE PROGRAMMED "ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT THEY WILL HAVE DEPLOYED SOME SORT OF AN ABM SYSTEM AROUND THEIR MAJOR CITIES BY THE MID-1970S."

LAIRD HAS WARNED ON TWO OCCASIONS THAT SOVIETS HAVE TESTED A "SOPHISTICATED" NEW ABM DEVICE.

ICBMS

LAIRD AND CLIFFORD AGREED THAT THE SOVIETS WERE CATCHING UP WITH THE UNITED STATES IN THE NUMBER OF INTERCONTINENTAL BALLISTIC MISSILES DEPLOYED.

HOWEVER, CLIFFORD SAID IN JANUARY, THE SOVIETS' NEW SOLID-FUEL MISSILE "APPEARS TO BE NO BETTER THAN OUR EARLIEST MINUTEMAN MISSILES, DEPLOYED IN 1963."

LAIRD, HOWEVER, CONTENDS THE SOVIETS HAVE DEPLOYED AT LEAST 800 GIGANTIC SS9 MISSILES CAPABLE OF CARRYING A 25-MEGATON PAYLOAD-- FAR LARGER THAN ANYTHING THE UNITED STATES HAS. CIA OFFICIALS LATE LAST YEAR TOLD CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES THAT THE SS9 MISSILES COULD CARRY ONLY 10 MEGATONS, ACCORDING TO SEN. STUART SYMINGTON, D-MO.

MANNED BOMBERS

CLIFFORD SAID SOVIET STRATEGIC BOMBERS WERE "DISTINCTLY INFERIOR TO ANYTHING THE UNITED STATES HAD AND WERE EXPECTED TO CONTINUE THEIR "GRADUAL DECLINE."

BUT GEN. JOHN P. MCCONNELL, THE AIR FORCE CHIEF OF STAFF, SAID THE MANNED BOMBER REMAINS "AN IMPORTANT PART OF THE SOVIET FORCE" AND WARNED THAT NEW RUSSIAN SUPERSONIC TRANSPORTS COULD EASILY BE CONVERTED INTO A HEAVY BOMBER.

THE NIXON ADMINISTRATION IS RECOMMENDING DEVELOPMENT OF A NEW SUPERSONIC INTERCONTINENTAL BOMBER. THE JOHNSON AND KENNEDY ADMINISTRATIONS REJECTED IT.

BOTH ADMINISTRATIONS RECOMMENDED AN ELABORATE NEW AMERICAN AIR DEFENSE SYSTEM TO DISCOURAGE THE RUSSIANS FROM INTRODUCING NEW MANNED BOMBER THREATS. BUT THE NIXON ADMINISTRATION APPARENTLY IS CONSIDERING DEVELOPING A MORE SOPHISTICATED FIGHTER-INTERCEPTOR TO COPE WITH A SUPERSONIC BOMBER.

NUCLEAR SUBMARINES

"REARLY LAST SENTENCE TO OUR BALLISTIC POLARIS SUBMARINES WHICH
ase 2002/05/07 : CIA-RDP71B00364R000300090010-5." BUT NAVY SECRETARY
JOHN W. CLIFFORD HAS WARNED THAT THE SOVIETS "ARE MODERNIZING
THEIR SUBMARINE FLEET, THE WORLD'S LARGEST." HE SAID, "FOLLOWING
A PERIOD OF LARGE SCALE SHIPYARD EXPANSION, NEW CLASSES OF
BALLISTIC MISSILE SUBMARINE AND NUCLEAR ATTACK BOATS ARE BECOMING
OPERATIONAL. SOME OF THESE NEW TYPES HAVE BEEN LAUNCHED THIS
FORESEEN A YEAR AGO."

IN ADDITION, THE NAVY HAS WARNED THAT NEW SOVIET MISSILE
ADVANCES--INCLUDING A COMBAT SYSTEM THAT IS SUPERIOR TO THAT OF THE
UNITED STATES--COULD MAKE THE U.S. POLARIS SUBMARINE FLEET
INVULNERABLE.

PRESIDENT NIXON, IN URGING CONGRESS TO APPROVE THE ABM, TOLD
A NEWS CONFERENCE LAST WEEK THAT THE UNITED STATES WAS IN DANGER
OF FALLING BEHIND THE SOVIETS STRATEGICALLY BY 1972 OR 1973.

CLIFFORD, ON THE OTHER HAND, SAID ONLY THREE MONTHS AGO,
THAT "EVEN IF THE SOVIETS ATTEMPT TO MATCH US IN NUMBERS OF
STRATEGIC MISSILES WE SHALL CONTINUE TO HAVE, AS FAR INTO THE FUTURE
AS WE NOW DISCLOSE, A VERY SUBSTANTIAL QUALITATIVE LEAD AND DISTINCT
SUPERIORITY IN THE NUMBERS OF DELIVERABLE WEAPONS AND THE OVERALL
COMBAT EFFECTIVENESS OF OUR STRATEGIC DEFENSE PROGRAM."

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--END REPEATING AND CANCEL--